

Rockville Environment Commission
Sustainable Development and Energy Committee
Minutes of the Meeting of Tuesday February 19, 2013

Attendance

John Becker, Clark Reed and Lea Rosenbohm

Meeting Commencement

The Meeting convened at 7:00PM

Discussion

The subcommittee members discussed those Commission goals and objectives for which the SDEC has the lead.

SOLAR

To reach the commission goals for residential solar installations it has been suggested that the city promote businesses that allow for homeowners to register on-line and receive competitive bids to install solar panels on their home.

ACTION: Chair Reed was to follow up with Mark to get an opinion as to whether or not the city would be able to promote this model while maintaining City neutrality.

SDEC would also like to promote residential solar through signage – providing home owners with existing solar panels would be provided with a yard sign with a catchy phrase promoting their use of solar energy. Home owners in the process of installing solar would be given a different sign, perhaps for window display. The commission would send a letter to residents with existing solar panels asking them to display the sign, participate in a solar homes tour, and/or be willing to be featured on the Channel 11 Rockville reports. The sign message preferred by the committee is “Another Rockville Family is Thinking About Going Solar – Us!”

ACTION ITEMS: Acquire list of residents with solar installed (Clark); investigate potential sign ordinance and Rockville (John) and also costs of signs (Herb).

In addition to greater efforts to promote solar, the committee would like to examine and eliminate to the extent possible any barriers to companies or residents for installing solar. One such potential barrier is the increase in soft costs of installation due to delays in the permitting process.

ACTION: Work with city staff (Erica) to find out the average amount of time permitting process takes in Rockville and then identify ways to reduce (LEA)

ACTION: Clark to look into legislation introduced by MD Delegate Carr for an energy audit ordinance similar to Austin TX

SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION ZONE

Action: Clark to take lead reviewing green code for barriers to moving forward with this.

ENERGY COMPETITION

John participated in meeting with Pepco consultants who were promoting Pepco's program for helping businesses become more energy efficient. This program seems to dovetail very well with the energy competition we would like to hold and we'd like to explore how Pepco could become a partner – and if they might be able to bring resources to the table.

ACTION: invite consultants to March Environment Commission meeting (John)

HOMETOWN HOLIDAYS

John is making progress with the wind turbine demos

We want to promote our solar efforts – saving money, producing own energy message. Get people to the booth with a tool that would allow us to plug in where they live and provide them with information on how much energy they could produce.

CITY UPDATE

Rockville is applying for the Maryland Smart Energy Community Grant that would help city owned buildings install solar power. Letter of intent is due March 1. Proposal is due April 1.